

JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

LUCILLE LEACH

CECELIA FOLLEN

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For Reference

Not to be taken from this room

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JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
INTERVIEWEE AGREEMENT

This manuscript numbering pages is a transcript of one or more tape-recorded interviews with me. Any reader should bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of my spoken rather than my written word.

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Understood and agreed to

Interviewers

Katherine L. Park
(signature)

(signature)

(signature)

July 28, 75
(date)

Interviewee

Cecilia M. Tollen
(signature)

303 So. Main Street
(address)

Wilmington, Illinois
(city & state)

July 28, 1975
(date)

11-19-75-550

JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE

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Interviewers

Bethanne A. Park
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(signature)

(signature)

July 28, 1975
(date)

Interviewee

Miss Lucille Leach
(signature)

Wilmington Il. Box 71
(address)

Wilmington Ill.
(city & state)

July 28, 1975
(date)

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FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1943

TWO BOYS DROWNED

**John 10 and Henry Cinotto, 6
Brothers Die in Abandoned
Mine**

John and Robert Cinotto, ages 10 and 6 respectively, sons of Mr. and Mrs. John Cinotto of Braidwood drowned late Friday afternoon while they were swimming in an abandoned strip mine coal pit located about one half mile east of Braidwood in Reed Custer township.

This pit was once operated by the Will County Coal Company but was abandoned seven years ago.

The bodies were discovered at 6 o'clock by Miss Theresa Zandi, her father, Domenic and a party who went there to swim. They first noticed the children's clothes on the edge of the pit and a few minutes later sighted the bodies in the water. Both were clothed in swimming trunks.

The Wilmington fire department responded promptly to the call but the inhalator failed to revive them. Their bodies are believed to have been in the water for several hours.

Surviving besides their parents are two younger children, Rosemary and Peter. Funeral services were held from the Patterson Funeral Home, Monday, July 12, at 9 a.m. to Immaculate Conception church at 9:30. Interment in Mt. Olivet cemetery.

Personal Shower

Miss Jean Ann Evans was hostess at a personal shower given in her home Sunday afternoon in honor of Miss Doris Bullock, who will become the bride of Melvin Hintze on July 25.

The home was made attractive with arrangements of peonies and hollyhocks. Centering the table, where refreshments were served was a bouquet of assorted garden flowers flanked by candelabra.

Shower games were played with prizes going to Miss Rachael Howard and Mrs. Oscar Bullock. They in turn presented them to the honored guest.

The guest list included: Misses Lucille, Geneva and Ruth Castevens, Rachael Howard, Fern Malone, Craig Dorothy and Mary

[The following letter is in reply to a series of articles that has appeared in The Chicago Sun—Ed.]

JOHN IRVING PEARCE
Attorney-At-Law
WILMINGTON, ILLINOIS

July 15, 1943

Mr. Silliman Evans,
Publisher
Chicago Sun,
Chicago, Illinois
Dear Mr. Evans,

This letter is a reply to the current series of articles written by Eddie Doherty, of your staff, and appearing in the July 12th and subsequent issues of the Chicago Sun.

For the past year I have been employed in one of the defense plants near Wilmington and have also practiced law in and about Wilmington. As the only lawyer in the community, a defense worker and a new resident, I feel it my duty to take exception to the exceedingly scurrilous articles referred to above.

I can scarcely conceive of your deliberately publishing such malicious and slyly vicious articles. So I will assume that in the press of business you let a well known trade writer slip his by-line copy past the watchdogs of the copy desk.

The articles, to begin with, are two years late. The same matter was written up in the Chicago Tribune well over a year ago. The present copy can have no particular value except perhaps to sell a few hundred extra copies to irate citizens with blood in their eyes and their fountain pens on subscription cancellation notices.

Furthermore, I cannot conceive any reason why your by-line writer goes out of his way—even with bold face type—to insult and slander, with utmost particularity, each and every class and element in the population of Wilmington.

First, he says that the original residents of the city—condescendingly referred to as "natives"—were backward and inhospitable by nature and tradition; that specifically they never did and do not even yet have any use for newly arrived defense workers. That the natives even went so far as to try to bar the workers from worship in churches.

Second, he gratuitously libels certain local families by name and calls them the inbred descendents of Kentucky Hill Billies, and therefore by inference degenerates. This sort of stuff, dear Mr. Evans, ill becomes you, who made your newspaper reputation among the hills of Tennessee. And in passing I might add that the Frost family, which your articles specifically mentions is doing very nicely. And I think it revealing no confidence to inform you that at least one member of the family, although a bachelor, is supporting five or six nephews and nieces and still refused to claim them as dependents on his recent income tax return. Incidentally he paid a tax near five hundred dollars last March.

Third, Mr. Doherty says that the other old residents of

Annual Church Picnic

YES IT'S HERE. Time for the picnic that comes once a year. Nothing can take the place of that day. It just can't. So get out what you can "mull out" of the rationing, that rules every pantry and refrigerator these days and pack it in a box, basket or bag to bring as a contribution to a day of church folks getting together. Let's not think of our cats too much this year, but just that we have each other to smile at and talk to about the privilege of life abundant here in Wilmington. We are bowing to the request of many mothers "not to have the picnic on the island" but on the church grounds. This meets with the hearty approval of all those responsible for the safety of the children. We hope that many children with their parents and friends will bring a picnic lunch. The vacation school closes on Friday with a program at 10 o'clock after which the picnic is to be enjoyed. Plan to come for the program at 10 a. m., and stay for the picnic.

Major Kenneth M. Haber Promoted to Rank of Lieutenant-Colonel

Information received today by Lt. Colonel Byron Rife, Commanding Officer of the munitions plants, reveals that Major Kenneth M. Haber, Commanding Officer of the Elwood Ordnance Plant, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, effective July 6, 1943.

Lt. Colonel Haber, who served as Commanding Officer of the Elwood Ordnance Plant from October 14, 1942 to May 5, 1943, was recently transferred to the Kansas Ordnance Plant, Parsons, Kansas as Commanding Officer of that plant.

Soloist Called to Broadcasting Station

Edwin Elliott has had an invitation to appear before members of the Moody Bible Institute Music Faculty, Saturday, July 17, at 4:00 p. m., over WMBL. Mr. Beverly Shay will preside at the console of the Kimball pipe organ. At a later period this program is scheduled to broadcast.

Resumes Piano Class

Miss Helen Williams, teacher of Piano, has resumed her piano class and will welcome all students. Phone 5881.

same families and are therefore congenital snobs and therefore (as Doherty says) are running true to form and have outlawed all strangers, defense workers and other recent arrivals in the city.

Fourth, he makes a "do gooder" or "sob sister" conclusion that the defense workers are downtrodden, but thanks only to the government houses, they are able to carry on with heads "bloody but unbowed."

All this is untrue. The City of Wilmington, has accommodated, housed and fed over three times its own original population. And this with no felonies, or epidemics and no personal property taxes on the defense workers or on their trailers.

The local merchants have not profiteered nor unduly raised prices. By Eddie's own admission they have maintained a better flow of merchandise than the merchants of Chicago.

The restaurants, only one of which is operated by a person who lived in this town before the boom, have done their Christian best to feed the multitude. And you can always, day or night, get all the coffee you want at table or in lunch box thermos. And there is sugar bowls on all the tables.

Not one defense worker came here without the assurance of financial betterment, although to be sure many did leave homes on farms and in smaller communities in the southern part of the state. And, of course, the defense workers are patriotic. I have been one of them and know well the long hours of the night shift. Yet, by and large, up until the 29 per cent tax hit them last month, they have averaged nearly double the cash wages that they were accustomed to making before the boom. And this applies particularly to the former state employees of police, penal and other institutions. From the state they drew about \$100.00 per month; while here at the plants the minimum pay for unskilled help is near \$200.00 per month. The skilled and unionized callings are still higher paid. That is one reason for the shortage of attendants in the State Insane Asylums

(Continued on back page)

A LITTLE FORESIGHT

No one likes to think of funerals, but a little foresight- the same amount of thinking ahead that is used for purchasing other items of necessity--should be used. It may mean the saving of money. It certainly means the saving of a lifetime of regrets--later.

There are many things you should know about funeral service- for your own protection. We will be glad to explain them. It costs you nothing to get the truth.

REEVES FUNERAL HOME

North Jelliet Street, east of High School

Telephone 2421



obb, S 59 ft E prt	245
on, N 40 ft of the	260
prt of out lot 6	100
nahoe Est, out lot 7	345
er, S 1/2 out lot 8	75
er, N 1/2 out lot 8	945
Wood, N 60 ft out	1050
Eva, blk, out lots	75
mpson Birkey, out lot	150
onahue Est, out lots	35
15	270
& J D Riley, out	1170
1 & 22	480
nderson, lots 7 & 8	330
hutton, lots 9 10 &	460
lton, lot 12 blk 5	75
lton, lot 13 blk 5	690
lot 14 blk 5	785
Barry, und 3/4 lot 2 &	895
3 blk 6	575
on, E 44 ft lot 3 blk 6	810
ett, W 22 ft lot 3 & E	1350
4 blk 6	575
adberry, W 22 ft lot 4	40
blk 6	455
ey, E 22 ft lot 1 blk 7	425
enworth, W 44 ft lot	445
ot 2 blk 7	595
ank, lots 3 & 4, blk 7	380
arter, und 3/4 lots 5 &	175
6 & 7 & strip of land	180
ks 4 & 5 E of river	200
ey, und 3/4 lot 9 blk 7	230
's Addn. to Wilmington	50
al, lot 1	210
ong, lot 2	300
g, lot 3	485
Addn to Wilmington	475
nson, lots 1 2 & 3 blk	550
	365
arnes, lot 4 blk 1	550
Wainwright, lot 5 blk	700
	375
Holder, lot 6 blk 1	400
en Treadman, N 1/2 lot	380
	250
ott, S 1/2 lot 7 blk 1	230
en Treadman, N 1/2 lot	395
	345
kin, S 1/2 lot 8 blk 1	460
en Treadman, lots 9 &	475
1	65
an Treadman, lots 11	125
k 1	360
States, lot 1 & W 1/2	230
blk 2	345
er, lots 4 & 5, blk 2	230
ates, lot 6 blk 2	395
er, E 1/2 lot 2 & lot 3	345
	460
ancey, lots 7 8 9 & prt	475
2	65
es, W 1/2 lot 11 & all	125
blk 2	360
Jones, lots 13 & 14 blk	230
	345
e Boden, lots 15 & 16	460
	475
ruiger, lots 17 18 & 19	65
	125
Davis, lots 1 & 2 blk 3	360
Hidlebaugh, lot 3 blk 3	230
iggs, lot 4 blk 3	345
Barnes, lots 6 7 & 8	460
	475
tt, blk 3	65
erson, lots 9 10 11 &	125
3	360
lains, lot 13 blk 3	230
F Riley, lots 14 & 15	345
	460
Munsey, lots 1 2 & 3	475
	65
es Foley, lot 4 blk 4	125
hte, lots 5 6 & 7 blk 4	360
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(Continued from page 1)

which you have loudly bewailed in your columns of late. And in many cases two or even three members of a family are on that payroll.

As for the government housing—the government trailers were so thoughtlessly located away from fire protection that several burned down and at least two persons were burned alive therein. Neither the trailer nor houses' rent is as low as it seems. They are new and modern, but small; and are rented unfurnished and unheated.

As to the derogatory remarks about the U.S.O. the "natives" built and still maintain and operate the very elaborate and expensive U.S.O. plant, although there are rarely as many as three service men ever in town at one time. The U.S.O. is devoted almost entirely to the defense workers and their children, with all sorts of activities from sewing classes to square dances.

The deposits of the bank here have no doubt doubled. But no finance company will make any loans to defense workers (employment to uncertain.) Yet this very old and very conservative First National Bank of Wilmington, has filled in the need and makes character loans, automobile and other chattle loans at straight 6 per cent interest—not 20 per cent nor 40. per cent. Rather courageous, these hard-shell country bankers. The town has settled down and the defense worker are now practically old citizens (I said your writeup was two years too late) Their children have been in school a whole year and we have excellent schools in Wilmington.

And to conclude, your by-line writer by inference belittles "coal miners." There are no coal miners in this area. The mines are "strip mines"—no relation to "strip tease"—and the emplyees are in effect surface excavators and dredge operators. The miners mostly employed by the Northern Illinois Coal Company are highly unionized and among the highest paid workers in the State.

The paper mill employs many of the families from "across the Kankakee River" and many of them have been employed for lo! these twenty years, and in fact as well as by Doherty's own admission, asks no help or favor from anyone. Maybe the old Kentucky pride, suh?

The lumber yard is a small sales branch and employs less than six men. And there just ain't no planing mill. If your correspondent had ever seen a planing mill he would at once notice its non existence. Or he would hear it screech a quarter mile away.

And lastly, for an Irishman, he is not very courteous to the ministry. I am sure that our good Catholic Priest is just as likely to cross the Kankakee River as any padre or any other sect. And incidentally, I am quite well acquainted on that "far shore" and find the residents thereof speak English and pay their fees in U. S. currency. I might even inform Mr. Doherty that there are many lovely homes and cottages on the other side of the River, as especially fine one being the residence of Mr. Davy, our Chief of Police.

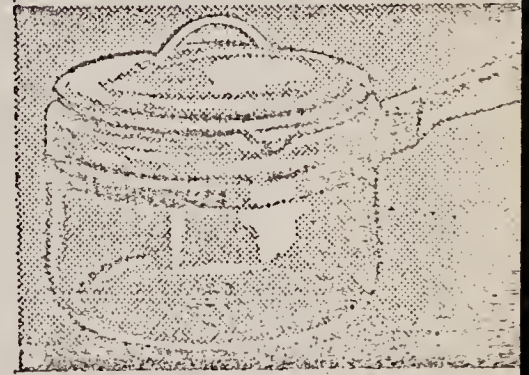
I trust, sir, that you will see fit to publish this letter in an appropriate spot in The Chicago Sun.

Yours Very Truly,

WEDDINGS! SHOW
ALL GIFT OCCASIONS

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PYREX
BRAND
GIFT HEAD



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A gift she'll use a dozen ways. Holds a good-sized roast with vegetables. Save dishwashing by serving in same dish the meal was cooked in. 10 1/2" size..... 50¢



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INTERVIEWER: Katherine L. Park

INTERVIEWEES: Lucille Leach and
Cecelia Follen

INTERVIEWER: Tonight we're talking with Cecelia Follen and Lucille Leach who have been in Wilmington area schools during their teaching years.

PARK: Miss Follen, where did you grow up?

FOLLEN: I grew up in Joliet.

PARK: When did you come to the Wilmington schools?

FOLLEN: I taught in Kankakee County first. I went to live with my sister and taught in Kankakee County first. And at that time there was a shortage of teachers, and I just finished high school and the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Sam Saltzgiver, had been my mother's teacher and a great friend of the family. My sister had taught, too. And he asked me to take the test. We had to take a test, and we had two trials. The first trial if you didn't pass all the subjects, you could take another trial or else you could get a provisional certificate. Well, I took my first trial right out of high school and I passed in all but two subjects -- elementary science and pedagogy. I had a month to study up on that and then go back and take it and I got it. I got my first certificate right then. An elementary certificate. And then I taught in a consolidated school -- District 86 in Kankakee County. I think I taught there four years in that school. And then we moved.

PARK: What grade level?

FOLLEN: I had all grades -- one through eight -- and thirty-two students.

It was something new because I was brought up in a convent. It was entirely new going into a country school. I walked four miles, built my own fires and served hot lunches on certain days. The boys and girls that were getting into mischief would wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen.

PARK: Well, that seems only fair. /Laughter/ How many years were you in Kankakee?

FOLLEN: Seven years. I taught seven years in Kankakee County and then the rest of the time I taught here in Will County. I taught in the Gray School and the Yates School. Then the next school I taught was the Bell School and the rest of my time I put in at Wilmington. Seventeen years at Brookside.

PARK: And these would be what you consider rural schools? The one-room school house.

FOLLEN: Well, out at the Bell School I had the first six grades the first year -- the first two years. Then I had the first three grades -- one, two, and three -- the last year I taught there. They closed the school and then I taught in Brookside from then on. I taught second grade in Brookside. I was to get third but Mrs. Longest wanted third, so Mr. Stevens asked me if it would be all right. And I said, "Surely, it would be all right."

PARK: How about you, Miss Leach?

LEACH: I was born and raised in Braidwood and I graduated in 1925. Twelve in our class. /Laughter/ An ex-mayor from Wilmington was in my class. And then I took the teacher's examination when I was a sophomore and I passed. There was four of us that took it. And then we finished

our junior and senior year although we could of gone out to teach. Then we went to Normal in the summer terms. Then in 1926 I tried for a school but teachers were a dime a dozen then. I couldn't get one so I worked at a clothing factory in the office for that year, and the next year I taught out at the Robinson School south of Custer Park and I taught there one year. The thing that I remember most about that . . . I drove a Model "T" and a storm came up and we couldn't even find the car. /Laughter/ So that when some of the fathers of the youngsters came and got us in a big wagon and two horses, so I stayed out in the country for about three nights until the storm subsided. Then the next year I got in the north Braidwood School. That's the Bohemian district. They called it Lower Braidwood, but it was really north. I taught there for seven years and then I taught two years in nursery schools in Joliet at the Lincoln and the Eliza Kelly. Then Mr. Stevens heard about me floating around /Laughter/ so he came and got me and I taught in Wilmington for 31 years. First I had departmental one year; then I went into third grade and I stayed there until one year ago when I retired.

PARK: What do you mean by "departmental"?

LEACH: Each teacher had his own subject. I had reading. Miss Butler had English, and Mr. McFarland had spelling, I believe. Each teacher had her own subject. There were about eight of us.

PARK: For all the grades?

LEACH: For sixth, seventh, and eighth. And I taught reading all day long -- sixth, seventh, and eighth. That was the departmental.

PARK: That was sort of the forerunner for the middle school?

LEACH: Yes, and then the schools were consolidated. Mr. Stevens really worked like a trooper to get everything straightened out -- the bus system and all that. It all worked out fine.

PARK: When did this consolidation take place?

LEACH: . . . What year would that be? . . . This is 1975. At least it's been consolidated about 15 years now.

PARK: Just that long ago?

LEACH: More than that?

FOLLEN: Yes.

LEACH: Well, probably 20.

FOLLEN: Because I taught Bell School three years and I taught over at Brookside 14 years. That's 17.

LEACH: Twenty would be more like it then. I don't remember exactly.

PARK: Before it was consolidated, you were at Central.

LEACH: Yes.

PARK: Now, was this just a grade school or high school?

LEACH: It was grade and high school both.

PARK: They were all there. Did they have separate principals for different structures?

LEACH: No, Mr. Stevens was over the whole kit and kaboodle, like they say. He was wonderful.

PARK: Compared to now, there seems to be so many discipline problems. How did they manage with all those grades in one classroom?

FOLLEN: In rural schools you don't have that discipline problem. You're close to the parents. You're close to everyone. I just loved that Bell School. That was just a wonderful school. Parents would come once a month and we'd have a meeting at night and talk things over. The children weren't there -- just the parents. And they would come and take the childrens' books out and look at them and see what they were doing. I'd sent homework everyday for the first four days -- everything went home at night. A paper every night went home. It had to be completed on both sides to get a perfect grade on it so they couldn't waste. And I sharpened the pencils and I doled out the papers so they couldn't waste tablets. When they got to fourth grade, they were able to take care of themselves from there on. The parents were so wonderful. They helped out with everything. They were always there willing to do everything.

LEACH: Did you teach under Mr. Maue?

FOLLEN: Yes, I first started in Will County under Mr. August Maue, and I loved him.

LEACH: He was the County Superintendent.

FOLLEN: He was wonderful. He'd come out and spend a whole day at my school. He asked me if he could bring out his wife one day. And I said, "I'd love to have her." So he brought his wife out and he spent the whole day with me. They were just wonderful people. Miss Cowell -- that was his niece -- and he and Hazel Cowell run off the whole county. All the country schools. And he always visited every school once or twice a year. And

if you called him, he'd come out right away -- if you had any trouble. I never had any trouble with the children.

PARK: It was more like a family-type arrangement.

FOLLEN: Yes. They were really lovely. The schools were different because they said the city school was better because it has so many other opportunities. We had singing. We had singing every morning. They had plenty of physical ed.

PARK: Walking to and from school. /Laughter/

LEACH: There's one thing city schools didn't have that we had. We had mib contests. We'd take the youngsters to Joliet, and they were winners all the time. You know, for shooting marbles.

PARK: Oh, for marbles!

LEACH: Yes, mib contests. And I have a gallon about that high -- you ask your son. And everytime they dropped one on the floor, it would go into the jar. And I have all those marbles from the youngsters. But we had a lot of fun. I meet lots of them now and they say, "Miss Leach, you remember we used to have the mib contests?" And I had a Model "T" then and we'd load. . . these were colored people, too -- a lot of colored people in . . . and we'd all load them up and take them to Joliet to the contest. That was fun. /Laughter/ Now they don't have that. They have contests, but they weren't as much . . .

FOLLEN: But they had all the other games that they have here. They played ball at recess and noon. The teacher supervised. We had to be out on the ground to watch them. They played football when football season was in.

They played basketball during basketball season. They played hockey on the ice. Right next to my school out here near Custer Park they had a great big field -- a slough. Mike Grugiel's father lived there and had a big lot, bigger than this room. I asked permission to have them skate on there at noon if I was out there, and so he said yes, it would be fine; we could do that. So we made rules in school. Before they went out, we had our rules all set. If one of the little ones fell down, a big one had to pick him up and help him and get him back to the side. During the noon hour they just had the time of their life during winter! When we got back in, they were all ready to go to work again. And we didn't give our tests in the end of the year either. We brought our pupils into Wilmington. Our eighth grade pupils came into Wilmington. And Mr. August Maue, the Superintendent, would take a piece of chalk and right out of his head would write all the questions out for every subject. He passed out paper, and the children answered the questions and handed in their papers. Ten teachers would sit in a row correcting each question. The last one would average and put the grade on the top. They got just as much, I think, in country schools. They asked one time Dr Hufford in Joliet, and he said he couldn't understand why, when the country school children came in, they were far advanced of the city children.

LEACH: We had a State course to follow, too.

FOLLEN: Yes, we used a State course. I have mine yet.

LEACH: For every grade it told you what they expected of that pupil, and they came in and they left that grade.

FOLLEN: During that month for every subject.

LEACH: And they taught physiology then too, which was really nice.

FOLLEN: They taught spelling, orthography, history.

PARK: This is just for the country schools?

FOLLEN: That was for all the rural schools.

LEACH: They had a physiology book in third grade one year, and they took it out. And we had a geography book, too, and they took that out. That was the best thing we had.

FOLLEN: That was a wonderful one.

LEACH: Now they have so much advanced stuff that the kids don't get it. Maybe education will come to itself one day, I hope, because right now I think it's really going to the dogs. I'm a teacher, and I don't mind saying it.

PARK: Do you think that when television came into prominence that this was a big change?

FOLLEN: It had a lot of effect. They can learn a lot from television if they look at the right shows. Now we visited Springfield -- the schools there. And they had wonderful programs. They had music on television. It was wonderful. And they had science on television. We went into the science room for television. It was wonderful, too. The teacher was explaining everything to the children. It was just grand. I thought that was wonderful. All the shooting and killing that the children watch

PARK: It's so passive compared to a more active environment that you were

talking about when you were teaching in the country schools.

FOLLEN: I really liked it. I would have liked to spend one more year there. They're all gone.

PARK: Did your pupils walk back and forth to school?

FOLLEN: They walked back and forth four miles. I did; I walked four miles to school -- every morning and night. Well, during the winter time we had a neighbor boy that always took pity on me. I'd get a sleigh righ. /Laughter/ When it was real bad, he'd have his horse hitched up. By the time I got there, I got a ride; that is, to school. I had his little nephew in school.

LEACH: I think Miss Follen and I could write a book between the both of us.

PARK: I think it would be a great idea.

FOLLEN: Schools were different, too. They didn't have the facilities they have in schools today. They had to go clear to the end of the school yard to go to the toilet -- way, way down. One day one little fellow came in -- I'll never forget.... He comes in and he comes walking up, and the seat of his pants flapping, flapping, and he turns around. /Laughter/ I just buttoned his underwear and buttoned the other, and I would smile at him. There was big kids. I had one girl that was older than I was. I had eight from one family -- the Woodall family. They were from the South. There was eight in the one family. There were four big boys and the rest were girls. They never cracked a smile. You know, today if a child would do that, they'd tear the building down.

LEACH: There was my country school just like Abe's cabin -- exactly like it. And there was one boy in eighth grade whose name was Warner. And I took his picture. He stood out in front with a club about that big, and he said, "I'm protecting the teacher." It was the funniest thing -- this one little shack like Abraham Lincoln's cabin, and here he was protecting the teacher. He's got that picture. I had it enlarged for him.

FOLLEN: I took a picture of the kids playing football and I had a girl who was just as rough as the rest of them. She married Johnny Muncey in town. He died. I didn't know what I did with it. Fifteen years later I found it. I sent it in to have it developed, and it developed perfectly. After laying fifteen years in that little box!

PARK: Without getting too personal, you were teaching during the thirties. What effect did you see of the depression around here?

(A personal effect on the teachers, during depression, was payment in script, called Teacher's Order, which they used like money at grocery stores, gasoline stations, etc. in lieu of money)

FOLLEN: I was teaching in the country at that time and usually the farmers had their own food and everything and they didn't suffer as much. Although we did have a family that lived right across from us and that man walked in every day nine miles to Wilmington to the mill to see if he couldn't get work. And then if he didn't get work, he'd come home. My brother-in-law would give him something to do to pay him a couple of dollars, and he always gave him a hog or chicken or eggs and milk. They were a family that was poor.

PARK: It was more of they helped each other out?

FOLLEN: Yes, they helped each other. He was a wonderful fellow -- really a nice fellow. He was a very good man and a very good worker. His wife died. He had a little girl. He remarried. But on my sister's sixtieth wedding anniversary he sent her a card from way in the South some place where he's at now. How ever he found out, he remembered it.

PARK: But the children you had basically had enough to eat?

FOLLEN: They had plenty to eat.

LEACH: There were some in our district who would come with just a few crusts. But between the principal and I we used to bring them fruit. I knew one little colored boy especially; they called him Pineapple Smith because his head went up like a little pineapple and he used to like pie. So, I used to bring him pie and his eyes would pop out of his head that big when he used to see that piece of pie, because they never got anything at home. And then I taught Rev. Pinnick -- he's a minister now in Joliet. He came down here and had a revival. He came last year and this year, too. So I went with Miss Butler; she goes to that church in Braidwood -- the Baptist. And I said, "Let's sit in the back so he won't see me." He looked real nice. He was way up in the front and he was squinting and he was going like this. He says, "I sees my old school teacher." So this time when he came back I had a big cake baked -- a half a sheet cake and I had a church in this corner -- they used to have a colored church in Braidwood -- and it had a little brown door on it and little shutters. The man at the bakery put them on. And it said here, "Good Luck, Rev. Ted." And he just cried. And he said nobody ever did anything like that for him in his life. He said, "When you cut the cake, you can't have the church." So he cut the church off and took it home.

/Laughter/ That was just a couple of months ago. And he never forgot it. Those colored people down there were really nice.

PARK: How did the black people come to Braidwood? Was it because of the mines?

LEACH: Yes, a lot of them worked in the mines. This fellow I'm talking about, his grandfather was a minister down there, too, at the colored church. There's still some of them in Braidwood yet. They're the nicest folks; they never forget you.

PARK: There are less now than there were?

LEACH: Yes, there are not too many left.

FOLLEN: At one time Braidwood was a very thriving town, very large.

LEACH: It was 10,000 at one time. The mines were there. My brothers and dad worked there. My brother was eleven when he went down in the mine.

FOLLEN: My brother-in-law was about that old when he went down in the mines.

LEACH: He's still living in Braidwood. My older brother is 95. He's in Springfield. He was a boss in the mine and he was boss over my dad and my dad didn't like it because he had to do what his son told him to do. /Laughter/

PARK: Someone told me that in Braidwood. . . well, you think of the energy crisis now and not having enough energy. Someone told me that they used to only work part of the year in the mines. There used to be lay-offs.

LEACH: Yes, they did. They closed down and in the other part of the year they went down to the Auburn mines. That's near Springfield because one of my brothers and my dad would be gone about five months out of the year when they'd be working down there.

PARK: Why was this? They didn't need the coal?

LEACH: I don't know because I was pretty young then.

FOLLEN: I remember Bill saying that, that they did.

LEACH: Unless it was too wet or something. They had the Diamond Disaster. You know about that down the road to Coal City where they got that big monument. There's about 125 under there, I think. And the water came in and they couldn't get out. I used to hear my mother tell me -- I was about five years old but I can remember -- they all flocked down there and every time the cage would come up, these women would be tearing their hair wondering if their husbands were there. One hundred twenty-five and they were miles under the ground. You see they couldn't make it to the cage. There was water and fire, too. It was terrible, I guess.

FOLLEN: They said they even ate the mules.

LEACH: My brother and dad happened to be up on top. It was terrible. Oh, there's a great history behind that.

FOLLEN: I think there were more children that were hungry that come to Brookside School than they did at any other school I ever taught at. Because they come from the Woods. (Meaning Brody's Woods). We had a lot of children from the Woods. But in the morning if they looked sleepy or

tired, and they didn't have any ambition at all, I'd say, "Did you eat your breakfast?" "No, I didn't have any breakfast." So I'd go out and make them a cup of hot chocolate and give them some soda crackers. We always kept corn flakes and different kinds of cereal there. We'd give them cereal. He'd eat it and come right back in and go to work.

LEACH: We had a lot at Central like that, too.

FOLLEN: Mickey Dixon was wonderful. Mickey would always watch it. He could tell you which child was hungry, and he'd have extra sandwiches.

LEACH: You could always tell. They always had cramps in their stomachs. At about 10:00 a.m. at about recess they were crying with cramps because they didn't have anything to eat. Some was uncalled for because the parents didn't get up to get them something to eat. But they always had milk there in school, and crackers. Lucille Caldwell helped in the office; she always saw that they got something to eat.

FOLLEN: When she leaves, they'll miss her. She's wonderful.

LEACH: The lunches were cheap then, but I've seen they've gone up to forty-five cents now. Do your youngsters eat in the cafeteria?

PARK: Yes, they all do. I think that even at forty-five cents nowadays, it's a bargain.

FOLLEN: Yes, they get a nice lunch usually. When I taught in Helen's room, there she had one little boy in there. I felt so sorry for that little fellow. He wouldn't eat anything. A little redhead who was mentally handicapped, but he could read. I never knew anybody like him. You could give him any storybook at all, and he could read the story

for you. He used wonderful expression. But he couldn't do anything else. He couldn't write. He couldn't attempt to write unless you made black lines. I made them just as black as I could. Anything you told him to color, he would color black. I'd say, "Don't use black now." And I'd take it away from him and I'd say, "Dwayne, don't use that. Use another color." But he'd get up and get a black from somebody else. I felt so sorry for him. He was a bright-looking little fellow. Bright red hair and pretty looking boy.

PARK: When the arsenal came in, you were both teaching around here.

LEACH: They were going to have double shifts then. Some come in the morning and some come in the afternoon, but it didn't quite come to that. They got the other school built in time, but they were pretty well crowded.

PARK: This is when they built Brookside and Northcrest?

LEACH: Yes.

PARK: But they had thought about having double shifts at Central?

LEACH: Yes, and it was a good thing that they didn't. Because you couldn't get all that in in a half a day. Now, of course, the way they have it with swimming and the P. E., the youngsters are on their own so much that you don't see them very much during the day. But they had it fixed in time that they didn't need the swing shift.

PARK: This was Mr. Stevens?

LEACH: Yes, he was the brains of it all. Now that Braidwood is consolidating, I guess they're having a terrible time. I think it's the same

superintendent or principal, I guess. He's just having an awful time. Mr. Stevens did, too. He was worried stiff about everything, but he came out all right.

FOLLEN: Did Mr. Booth come in after Mr. Stevens? . . . No, he was before Mr. Stevens. He was good. He really cleaned up the country schools --any one that was run down or anything. He had his faults, but he was there on a minute's notice. If you couldn't locate him in his office, somebody would locate him for you in a minute.

PARK: When this happened with the arsenal coming. . . What was your previous enrollment, and how much did it increase?

LEACH: Well, at one time I had 49 in third grade. That was quite a bit. And gradually they used every room, and they used the basement. Even in the Presbyterian Church they had a class. So they had to squeeze them in some way. It was getting out-of-hand because there were just too many to handle. Then we got about 20 or 25, and that was just nice. That's a good enrollment.

FOLLEN: That's a nice group. You can watch everyone and see what everyone's doing.

LEACH: And I'll tell you who I had -- I had Bobby VanBinson and that redheaded . . . oh, he's a brother to that McShane woman . . . She married the first husband and they fought all the time. Even on the pictures -- we had our pictures taken -- I had to stand in the middle. I've got a picture of every class I had. Once in a while I put one in the paper. I had the class of 1961 in not too long ago. Now I've come to the point where I can't find any place to put the gifts and things

the kids have given me so when they get married, I give them back to them for a wedding present. I got one for Curt Hines and he called the wedding off, but it's going to take place again, I guess, in a couple of months. So I have his gift all ready to give to him. And different ones have given something that wasn't useable. He gave me a beautiful dish. It was a relish tree that was a Christmas tree. It was beautiful. I put the date on the back and his name and my name so when he gets married, that's what he's going to get for his wedding present. The Bitterman boy, of course, didn't get married yet. It's a Christmas tray. In a small apartment I just can't put all those things away. Oh, lots and lots of things in my cedar chest! When I taught in North Braidwood, all those Bohemian women crocheted on pillowcases and even put crocheting and tatting on the towels and things like that. And that's a long time ago now, and those things are still good. I have a linen tablecloth in there from Ireland, and it's forty years old and never been out of the paper. My principal gave it to me. It's got twelve napkins to match. It's a beautiful thing, but I would never use that. It's for a banquet. But that's why I'm getting rid of my things. /Laughter/

PARK: This has been a most enjoyable evening talking and reminiscing with both of you, and I want to thank very much.

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